

# CORADDI

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA



Summer '51

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## Under Cover

The summer issue of CORADDI might be termed a "story edition"—at any rate, it contains one more than the usual three stories that have been all that could possibly be fitted with hammer and wedge into the make-up for most of this year. The stories came this time somewhat at the expense of features; but we thought that they were good stories and stories that you would like, and so we quietly beat our scholarly conscience over the head with the make-up scissors and went ahead.

MONTAE IMBT, who is becoming a regular in CORADDI's poetry section, appears again with "The Desired." LAURA L. W. LEWIS'S "The Fuddling Cup," which had to be left out in the winter issue, is the charmingly and consistently written story of a little girl caught in the personality struggle between her tyrannical grandmother and her good-natured, slightly degenerate great-uncle. The author is a graduate writing workshop student. JANET S. FYNE'S "The Special Day" deals individually and sensitively with a theme known to most of us through our own experience. It was written for advanced composition class. ANN POLLARD, who is now a writing workshop student but whose "The Little Barber" was written before she enrolled in the class, has done a very skillful and delicate treatment of a fragile mood of loneliness. ELIZABETH POPLIN'S "Charlie My Boy," a story which involves several genera-

tions of Georgia's former aristocracy and which is filled with amusing local color incidents, has a style, a texture, and an air of authenticity hard to attain. All of these authors publish for the first time in CORADDI. One is a sophomore, two are juniors—a circumstance which makes us happy as to next year's prospects. BARBARA McLELLAN'S review of *World Enough and Time*, Robert Penn Warren's latest novel, will hold a special interest for Woman's College students after the author's role in Arts Forum here. The art, assembled by MARGARET CLICK and her staff, exhibits a variety of technique and subject matter. We are especially proud of the cover design, which, although it was originally in color, turned out, we think, quite well.

And now, with a slight catch in our throats and with a feeling closely akin to bereavement, we, the new staff, wish to say a heart-felt "THANK YOU!" to the old staff, who, in spite of a scarcity of material throughout much of the year, managed to come away from the North Carolina Collegiate Press Association Convention with an award for the best literary magazine. And to JOANNE McLEAN, without whose technical advice and moral support the publication of this issue would have been a near-impossibility, we say "Thank you!" again and especially. We shall try to live up to the standards which have been left to us.



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# CORADDI

WOMAN'S COLLEGE of the UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
Greensboro, N. C.

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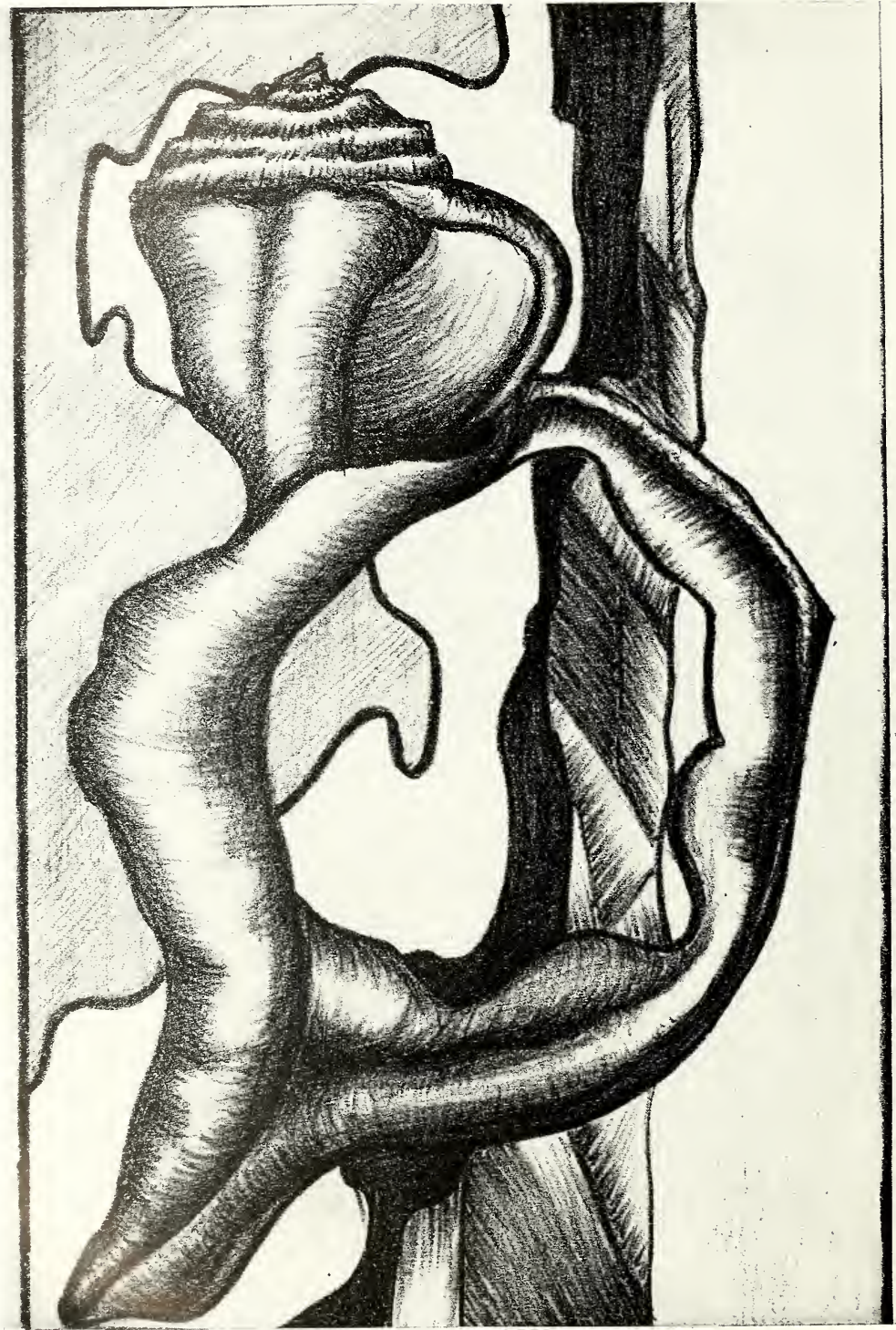
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# The Fuddling Cup

by LAURA L. W. LEWIS

UNCLE WILL'S room was an enchanting place. To Margaret Ann, spending an afternoon there was like a trip on a magic carpet, exciting and rare. She could almost count on the fingers of her two hands the afternoons that she had spent there—that is, with the sanction of her mother, whose reluctance was of course due to Grandmother's evident disapproval. Father seemed to think the whole thing silly and dismissed any discussion on the subject with a vehement "Bosh!" In fact, Father had even been located down in Uncle Will's room one evening when Grandmother and Mother had gone to a musicale, and there had been an urgent long distance call. Margaret Ann remembered how gay he had sounded talking over the telephone and how he had gotten out his clarinet afterwards, dusted it off and played to her enthusiastic but imperfect accompaniment, laughing when he hit a sour note and she missed an entire chord, and how they had scampered upstairs to bed when they heard Grandmother's carriage drive up under the porte-cochere.

The next day, things had slipped back into the old ceremonial rut with Grandmother at the helm: breakfast at 8:30, luncheon at 1:00, dinner at 7:15 sharp, and always tea at 4:00 in the very best English manner; all intervening activities planned toward the careful cultivation of the family tree. The passing days were like a string of defenseless paper dolls cut to the pattern of Grandmother's will and neatly clipped off with the scissors of her self-assurance. To Margaret Ann, she was the Law of the Medes and Persians, the Magna Carta, the Constitution of the United States—all wrapped up in one bundle of swishing black taffeta.

Really, in twelve long years Margaret Ann had never seen Grandmother show any signs of defeat except on two occasions. Certainly, Father had lost time and time again, just as he did when he brought a deck of cards home. "Playing cards in this house!" Grandmother had said, straightening up to her towering five feet eight inches. "Indeed—no! What would our Scotch ancestors think of such an — an — iniquitous innovation!" And she had thrown them straight into the open fire. Mother had stood by, looking like a pale Dresden doll. Father had laughed—weakly.

But there was the day that the irresistible lamp salesman with the slight British accent had come by. Grandmother had said, "Margaret Ann, fetch your parents while I ring for the servants. I have made a remarkable purchase today; you must all see it." Then to the assembled household, "Now—see here," she had continued, lifting an odd-looking gas lamp from the table, "this lamp is *unbreakable*. Fancy that! The salesman demonstrated quite successfully. As a matter of fact, he even threw one on the floor—so!" With

the confidence of a Wellington in anything British, Grandmother dropped the lamp . . . It shattered into a thousand glassy splinters . . . Father had *almost* laughed but controlled himself, remembering that he was only an in-law and seeing the expression on Grandmother's face as she turned to the maid and said, "*Bessie, go fetch the broom!*" It had never been mentioned again.

Then there was the time that Uncle Will had come to live in the basement room which had been Grandfather's office when he was alive and more recently, a playroom. Margaret Ann had come skipping up the boxwood-bordered walk. "Daughter," Grandmother had said, "we have had—had quite a surprise today. My brother, your Great-uncle William, has come back. He will have the basement room. Your doll house and other things have been moved to the attic room, and I—I hope you will keep to the upper part of the house more."

Margaret Ann had looked up timidly, sensing that some trembly tone of voice that Grandmother had used when she told Bessie to get the broom.

"You are really a big girl now," Grandmother continued in her usual confident manner, "and should not spend so much time with the help in the kitchen nor with John while he is busy with his gardening."

Margaret Ann had said, "Yes, ma'm," hung her school bag on the hatrack in the dark back-hall and run up the steps to her room, blinking hard against the hot, insistent tears. With rising hate she had looked at the pink-and-blue, little-girl rightness of her room with its battery of family photographs on the mantel . . . *Not to play in the basement any more!* Why, it had always been her favorite spot—with the cheery, carefree laughter of the servants, the warming smell of spice cake and smoky hams baking in the big oven of the range-room, the inviting cavern of the inner pantry jealously guarded by old Anna with her jangling bunch of keys for forty faithful years. All of the real life of the house had been there—in the basement, all the fun; not on the three upper floors with their silent, carpeted floors, massive furniture, ghost-like lace curtains . . . Margaret Ann had thrown herself across the bed weeping . . .

Weeping as she was now over the cruel fate of Uncas. She opened the book and reread the passage through blurred eyes . . . Yes—Uncas was dead—that was really the *last* of the Mohicans . . . She *must* share this sorrow with someone . . . *Uncle Will!* She walked slowly to the stairs and, hesitating, started down . . . Perhaps she shouldn't go to Uncle Will's room again without permission, but there was a delicious feeling of adventure doing *something* without forever asking permission of some preoccupied grown-up . . . Anyhow, Grandmother had said a year

ago that she was a big girl. It was certainly high time to start making a few decisions, she assured herself, hugging the book more tightly to her and sliding her right hand along the polished banister.

The grandfather clock in the hall below struck a mellow four, reminding her that Grandmother and Mother were at this very minute having their first cup of tea with Aunt Ellen and that Father was probably hurrying to the Old Hickory Club for his weekly game of chess where he would be picked up by the ladies on their way home. A visit to Aunt Ellen's was usually a three-hour excursion with the long drive to the plantation and back . . . Three whole hours for her very own . . . Three times sixty — *one hundred and eighty* minutes! There was plenty of time. Perhaps she had better think things over before risking one of Grandmother's tirades . . .

She lifted a big metal disc from the record cabinet in the music room, feeling the rough under-side and wondering again how this lifeless thing could make such lovely music. She must remember to ask Uncle Will, she thought, placing the disc on the music box and sitting down on the edge of the horse-hair sofa . . . *The Bells of St. Mary's* tinkled to a finish followed by *Push Dem Clouds Away* . . . Margaret Ann jumped up and turned off the music . . . How could she push the clouds away today when Uncas, that brave Indian, lay there dead? She walked quickly to the library, but the fire had died down and it was chilly there. The ceiling-high shelves with their heavy volumes were formidable walls closing in on her. The row of books on the bottom shelf left her colder than the fireless room: Hippocrates' *Ancient Medicin*, Plato's *Republic*, Sextus Empiricus, Galileo's *Two New Sciences*, Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary*, St. Thomas' *Summa Theologica*, *On Truth, Falsity and Human Knowledge*, Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead* . . . "*The dead!*" Margaret Ann repeated in an awed whisper . . . "Oh!" . . . She ran from the room, opened the door to the basement, ran down the steps and into the comforting warmth of Uncle Will's room.

"Well, well," he said, knocking his pipe out on the hearth, his eyes twinkling merrily, "this is a real tonic for a rainy day. Bessie told me you were in your room with a cold and here you come flying out of the air like a golden-haired fairy! Sit down here in front of the fire, my dear, and catch your breath. You are breathing like a scared rabbit."

"Oh, I really didn't have a cold, Uncle Will. I sneezed and coughed several times, so Mother said I'd better stay in and take some vaseline and sugar . . . Ugh! Have you ever had to take that, Uncle Will?"

"No, child, no. They tried to make me take it, but I got away before they caught me." Uncle Will chuckled. "I find a little rock and rye a better prescription *and* — more palatable . . . Harrumph, as a matter of fact I've had a slight cold myself."

Margaret Ann made a mental note that she would ask Mother to give her rock and rye, whatever that was, instead of vaseline and sugar next time. "Here's

your book, Uncle Will. I finished it today. Wasn't it terrible about Uncas? And why couldn't he marry Cora Munro? It was so awful when . . ."

"Now, now, my dear, don't worry your pretty head about such things. It's just a story, just a story and not really —" Uncle Will stopped abruptly and looked into the dancing flames. A cloud seemed to pass over his face and dim the light in his eyes, just as the clouds had scudded across the April sun and brought the showers today.

"Never mind, Uncle Will. I know it's just a story, and I would like to have another one of your books if I may. I believe the ones in the library are too old for me. I can't even pronounce the names."

Uncle Will threw back his head and laughed. Margaret Ann joined in, not seeing anything particularly funny but happy that the cloud had passed and all was sunshine again.

"Well, those books upstairs happen to be my books, too," he said. "I read them all back in the days when I was studying to be a lawyer, just before I went off to war . . . I haven't seen them since."

"But why don't you ever come up to the library and read them? You never come upstairs to —" Margaret Ann stopped short, seeing a shadow start across his face again. "I don't blame you at all, Uncle Will. It's really much nicer down here . . . May I look at some of your pictures? I finished the ones from the Pacific Islands last time."

"Of course you may. You'll soon be a widely travelled young lady at this rate! Let's see . . . Here we are." He placed a big basket of pictures beside her and handed her a stereoscope. "And just to help you forget that old vaseline and sugar, I have a surprise for you . . . You go ahead with the pictures and I'll find it."

"But, Uncle Will, I want you to *tell* me about the pictures. That's what I like about them."

"Well, you just browse around a bit, and I'll be back in a minute."

Margaret Ann watched him as he walked, a little unsteadily, to the back room which served as a combination dining room and kitchen. She had often wished that she could have her meals down here with Uncle Will instead of upstairs in the big, formal dining room . . . She looked around the room at the fabulous collection of strange things of which she never grew tired, walked over to the heavy walnut cupboard in the corner with its shelves full of weird objects, and read again the labels in Uncle Will's flowing handwriting. There was the devil fish, the whale's tooth, a boomerang, a rusty old pistol, a machete, bright-colored things woven by the Indians — really things from all over the world, thought Margaret Ann with the feeling of a budding cosmopolite. And there on the little Haitian mahogany table by the cupboard was the funny old thing Uncle Will called an English fuddling-cup. What odd people the English must be to have such things! Imagine six cups all connected inside and having to empty them all

before you could empty one! Why, she couldn't have drunk that much lemonade as much as she loved it! The thought amused her and she lifted the vessel to her lips. There was the same odor about it that she associated with Uncle Will. It was damp inside. She put it down quickly . . . It even looked like him in a way—fat, jovial and generous . . . But she didn't like to hear people calling Uncle Will "Old Fuddlecup." It was more the way they said it than anything else.

She heard the clinking of glass and the water as it coughed from the spigot in the next room. Then Uncle Will, sputtering and chuckling, came back and dropped down heavily in the big Morris-chair, holding a long black instrument in his hands. "Well, here's your surprise," he said, "but let's get on with the pictures."

"What in the world is it, Uncle Will?"

"It's a telescope, my dear, but more about that later. What do we have as our first stop?"

"This one," said Margaret Ann, handing him the telescope. "This great big mountain."

As he took the stereoscope, she noticed that his hand was shaking, his eyes a glittery blue, and the scar on his left cheek hardly noticeable against the red of his face. There was a trace of brown on the usually snow-white mustache. As he leaned forward to adjust the back of the chair, she caught the strong odor of tobacco mixed with that other strange smell.

"This," said Uncle Will, settling back in his chair, "is the Blue Mountain Peak, the highest mountain in the West Indies."

"Were you really there, Uncle Will?"

"Just a few miles below there at the British rest camp. There are only two in the world. The other is in India, but this one is far more beautiful, way up in the mountains of Jamaica, the island of springs. Coming up that narrow road—you can see a bit of it there in the picture—" He handed the stereoscope back to her and she glued it to her eyes. "Coming up that road, there are three hundred and sixty-seven hairpin turns, and those first lorries were hardly fit for the journey, but—we made it somehow. We had to or die with yellow fever."

"Did the men really turn yellow?"

"Yes—yes—many of them did—but there are worse things. Lots of people turn yellow in the tropics."

"Really, Uncle Will? What—what shade did they turn?"

"Oh, let's see—a sort of lemon yellow—on the outside . . . But it was beautiful up there at Newcastle—cool, and the vegetation was just like that in old England."

"Then why didn't you just stay on up there?" Margaret Ann moved closer, her arms folded on the big arm of his chair, cushioning her chin.

"There was work to do, my dear, work to do . . . We had to teach those damn rebels a lesson."

Margaret Ann looked at Uncle Will with wide-eyed admiration. His "damns" were so much more

stirring and cathartic than Father's "boshes" and "thunderations."

"It was on the last trip down one day that one of the lorries broke away and went over the precipice."

"Was any one—killed, Uncle Will?"

"Yes—yes . . . She would have been your—your—Yes, a nurse, a very beautiful woman. I got this scar trying to save her."

Margaret Ann sat silent, staring into the fire, thinking of all the wonderful people in the world who had died so cruelly—Uncas—and now this beautiful woman. "Tell me about her, Uncle Will."

"Some other day, dearie, some other day . . . We had better postpone the rest of our trip," said Uncle Will rather abruptly. "We'll go up to the cupola and take a look through the telescope before the folks get back."

Margaret Ann's disappointment was lost in the excitement of a new adventure. "But," she said with doubt, "do you think you really should?"

"What?" exploded Uncle Will. "Not go upstairs in my own home? In the house that was my father's and his father's before him!"

"Oh—oh—not that, Uncle Will. It's such a steep climb up the cupola and I thought—thought . . ."

"Tch, tch, child, don't you worry about your old Uncle. He's been higher than a cupola in his life!" He arose from the chair with effort. "You lead the way," he said, and they started up the first flight of steps.

"Here," he said as they reached the second flight, "can you give me a hand with this? You take the telescope. I can manage the tripod."

Uncle Will was panting and puffing as they climbed the narrow, steep steps from the attic to the cupola. He sat down on the top step, his breath coming in short gasps. "Here you are, my dear. Place the—telescope on this—this tripod and—and take—a look—out the window while I—I catch my breath . . . Pull it in—or out until you can—can see—clear—ly."

"Are you quite all right, Uncle Will?"

"Certainly—certainly."

Margaret Ann set the instrument up, squinted one eye and started peering through it . . . "Oh!" she exclaimed. "There's a mountain . . . It must be Boone Mountain . . . It looks so *close*—and so big! I always thought it was only a bluff."

"A bluff!" Uncle Will laughed noisily. "Hahahaha, your Grandmother used to tell me I was just like Boone Mountain—a big bluff overlooking the town." "Maybe she was just joking, Uncle Will."

"Joking? Your Grandmother *joking*? Oh my, oh my, oh my!" Uncle Will slapped his knees and laughed more loudly still.

"And there's the river . . . I can almost touch the water . . . See!" she said, stretching out her hand.

"Better not—better not," sputtered Uncle Will. "I got my first real whipping for going out there and going swimming."

(Continued on Page 20)

## World Enough and Time

by ROBERT PENN WARREN

Random House, 1950

ROBERT PENN WARREN, recently on Woman's College campus as an Arts Forum critic, had published last year an historical novel of semi-frontier life in Kentucky during the early 1800's. The story is based on a true incident that occurred in the city of Frankfort, Kentucky, on May 9, 1826, when a certain Jereboam O. Beauchamp was tried for the murder of Colonel Solomon P. Sharp. Sharp, aside from being a political leader to whom Beauchamp was violently opposed, had also been the lover of Beauchamp's wife prior to her marriage. From these events Robert Penn Warren has built the plot of his novel, *World Enough and Time*.

The story is related chiefly through quotations from a manuscript Jeremiah Beaumont wrote telling his story while waiting in his cell. We see, in flashbacks, how Jeremiah, proud, sensitive and idealistic, fell in love with Rachel Jordan, who had been seduced and betrayed by his own benefactor, Colonel Cassius Fort. Outraged by the behavior of Fort and moved somehow by motives that he did not understand, he courted this girl who had become a bitter neurotic and had withdrawn from a world that to her was ruined. Rachel finally agreed to marry him on the condition that he kill Fort.

The subsequent events, his failure to force Fort into a duel, his marriage to Rachel in spite of this, his part in the seething politics of nineteenth century Kentucky, keeps the story in a state of tense melodrama which reaches a climax in Jeremiah's eventual murder of Fort. There follows a series of complications in a trial riddled with perjury, in jailbreaks and escapes, in courtroom action, and in criminal intrigue which seems endless.

This then is the surface plot. But *World Enough and Time* attempts to be something of more ambition and wider scope, a philosophical novel of moral issues, the dramatization of ethical conflict. Steeped in symbolism, the book is a discussion of the real meaning of truth, justice and honor. It is, however, only a presentation of the problem. The author has his hero spend endless pages of tormented self-analysis and doubt in the abstractions of values. Convinced that his revenge on Fort is honorable in motivation though dishonorable in deed, Jeremiah sets aside the laws of his society, and takes upon himself the execution of his own standard of right. He is, however, perfectly willing to perjure himself at the trial, to suborn witnesses, and to rationalize completely his actions so that, in carrying out private justice, he always feels himself morally superior to others. Through all his doubt and soul-searching he fails ever to reach a con-

clusion or to find any part of the elusive truth that evades him.

Thus Mr. Warren merely presents this dilemma of mankind. Betrayed by the man whom he had most admired, surrounded by men who had no scruples, men who, although they stood for right in politics, were willing to use dishonest means to gain their end, Jeremiah is torn with the conflict of obtaining justice and honor in a time when justice was compromised for the sake of selfish gain and honor was prostituted in the name of power. *World Enough and Time* seems to

promise with each of Jeremiah's turbulent mental soliloquies some sort of solution to this larger problem. It never fulfills this promise. Consistently indicating that it is going to present something better than it has up to that point, it fails repeatedly to advance in a solution of the problem or to establish any moral justification or condemnation of the actions of the hero. It leaves the reader in the same turbulent frame of mind he reached upon the first of Jeremiah's long debates with himself.

Mr. Warren's technique is deliberate and carefully chosen. He has remarkably depicted the flashy life of early Kentucky in the use of imaginary newspapers, handbills, and documents that recreate the literary style of the era. He has shown vividly the color of a period when the frontier was gradually giving way to a more elegant society, and he has certainly appropriately labeled his tale "a romantic novel." It is just that—a story that teems with action and suspense, that seethes with intrigue and reversal. He has, however, failed on two points: the motivations and idealism fail at times to ring true, and his two main characters are stiff and unreal.

The book is romantic and compelling. It is intricately and artfully written. Its depth gives it a more solid foundation than most current fiction and, in spite of its failures, it is well worth reading and highly entertaining.

Barbara McLellan



by Jessie Ford



# The Special Day

by JANET S. FYNE

HER name was Ellen Scott Burton like her mother's and she wished her grandmother would call her Scotty like everyone else instead of Ellen all the time, and she was twelve and she wished Grandma would stop treating her like she was eight. The button was off her shorts and she couldn't find a pin anywhere. "Ellen?"

"Yes'm?" Here it comes, Scotty thought.

"Are you going off with those Allison boys again?"

You'd think Worth Junior and Mike were members of the Ku Klux Klan or something. "I'm just going over in their back yard to look at Mike's rabbit."

"Must you run around with those boys all the time, Ellen? If your mother were here—"

"Mother likes boys," Scotty broke in, having found a pin and pinned her shorts together. "She wanted six. Bye, Grandma. Yell if you want me."

The screen door slammed after her and she jumped from the top step to the ground. She'd catch it later for saying that, but she couldn't help it.

The boys were in their back yard feeding pieces of lettuce to the big brown rabbit. "Hi!" she called, "Why didn't you wait for me before you gave him his breakfast?"

Worth Junior looked up at her and grinned. "This is his lunch, lazy bones."

Scotty stuck out her tongue at him, wishing she was as brown as he was. "Ah, I was up before both of you. What's his name, Mike?"

"The rabbit's?"

"No, Worth Junior's."

"Ha ha. You try to be so funny. What's a rabbit need a name for, anyway?" Mike was only ten, but he sure did think he was smart.

"He's got to have a name, stupid. What'll you call him?"

"That's a good idea. I'm gonna call him Stupid 'cause he looks like you."

Scotty said "Tch tch" because it made Mike madder than anything.

Worth Junior said, "Go get him some water, Mike. In the sardine can."

"Aw—okay." Mike acted like he never wanted to do anything Worth Junior suggested, but he always did it anyway. "Here. It still smells like sardines. Do rabbits like fish?"

"Sure," Scotty said. "Didn't you know rabbits were born tadpoles just like frogs?"

"Oh, shut up," Mike said. "You know everything, don't you?"

"Yep, and that's lots better than not knowing anything," Scotty grinned.

Worth Junior set the sardine can inside the pen. "Let this fellow finish his lunch in peace and we'll go up and finish painting the tree house."

Grandma had forbidden Scotty to go up to the tree house, but she could no more have stayed away from it than she could walk on her hands. Grandma just didn't understand about it. It was a wonderful tree house, built in the big oak between the two houses. The boys had been working on it all summer. It had walls and a roof with real shingles. There was room in it for three people easy. The boys always went up by the big rope, which they pulled up after them, but it hurt Scotty's hands so she climbed up by the steps they'd nailed to the tree trunk. They only had to finish painting it on the outside and it would be all done.

Scotty shot a quick look toward her grandmother's house, then scrambled up the steps as fast as she could. The boys were already up. Scotty pried the lid off the paint and handed Worth Junior the brush. He climbed out on a big limb, and, locking his long legs around it, dipped his brush in the can Scotty held for him, and began to paint. He worked carefully, without talking. Scotty thought it was wonderful the way he could balance on the limb and paint so good at the same time. He whistled a little under his breath. Worth Junior was funny— When he was working on something, it was like there was no one else around.

When he'd finished, he handed the brush to Scotty and climbed inside the tree house. Scotty moved over and he sat down beside her, perspiration gleaming on his bare shoulders. "Well, that's over," he said.

"It looks swell," Scotty said admiringly.

"Thanks." He grinned at her, and wiped his forehead with the back of one hand. "You put in plenty of time on it, too. You and Mike both."

"All I did was hammer nails where you told me," Scotty said modestly.

"Well, I sure did more than that," Mike said loudly. Worth Junior looked at her and they both laughed.

They sat and talked for awhile, and then Scotty said, "I have to get down. If Grandma calls me to lunch and I answer from up here, she won't let me out of the house for a month." She started down the steps and Worth Junior threw the free end of the rope down.

"Hey—" Mike said to his brother. "We don't have to go down now!"

"I—got a couple of things to do before lunch," Worth Junior said. "You don't have to come down." He and Scotty reached the ground at the same time. "I have to go off this afternoon—" he began.

Scotty had already started across the yard. She shrugged her shoulders. "Okay. See you later."

Grandma was fixing flowers in the living room when Scotty walked into the house. "Did you have a nice time playing, Ellen?"

"We weren't 'playing', Grandma, we were—feeding the rabbit."

"Oh, Ellen, how in the world did you get brown paint on your new shorts?" Scotty nearly choked on that one. "Go take them off and give them to Ada. Maybe she can get it out."

"Yes *m'am*." Scotty hurried out of the room. She went to her bedroom and changed shorts quickly, then took the new pair to the kitchen and gave them to Ada.

"I cain' see how you c'n git so many clo'es messed up so fas'," Ada said, grinning at Scotty. "Ain't no lil' boy could dirty up no mo'."

"Well, hadn't you rather wash shorts than a lot of dresses?"

"I sho' had, but it *do* look lak you could manage t' stay 'way from paint and grass stain."

"I'm sorry," Scotty said absently. "How long before lunch? I'm starving."

"Jes' till I gits it on th' table. S'posin' you helps me. Then it'll be ready in no time."

"Oh, well—okay." Scotty wished she'd cleared out before.

It didn't take them long to get it on the table, and Scotty called her grandmother.

"How *nice* of you, dear, to help Ada with lunch. It's time you were learning something about the kitchen." Grandma patted Scotty's shoulder fondly.

"I only helped her put it on the table so we could eat sooner," Scotty said. "My gosh, I'm hungry!"

"Ellen, do you *have* to use that expression constantly?"

"No *m'am*." Scotty bowed her head before her grandmother could say any more. "Lord-make-us-thankful-for-what-we-are-about-to-receive-Amen."

"Don't you think it would be nicer if you didn't ask the blessing quite so — rapidly?"

Scotty swallowed her soup hurriedly, and it burned her. "I'm sorry."

"Why can't you — oh, never mind. I received a letter from your mother this morning saying she would arrive sometime tomorrow."

Scotty's face lit up. "Oh, gosh,—I mean, that's swell."

"Too bad your father couldn't come."

"Yes'm. You should see Mike's rabbit. He's a great big fellow—and does that rabbit eat lettuce!" Scotty tried to spread out her green beans so it would look like she'd eaten them.

"Which one is Mike, the big, yellow-haired one? The Allisons haven't been living here too long, and I never have learned to tell those boys apart."

"That's Worth Junior. Mike's the little, black-haired one. He's ten, but Worth Junior's fourteen."

"I see. Which one do you like better?"

Scotty held her fork in midair and thought a minute. "Gosh, I don't know. Mike's real mean some-

times and he thinks I can't do anything as good as he and Worth Junior but he's fun and he can throw the darndest curve ball you ever saw."

"Yes?"

"Well, Worth Junior teases me sometimes, too, but he's nice even when he teases me. He likes airplanes and things like that. He can think of all kinds of things for us to do. He makes me mad, though, he acts like he doesn't *expect* me to be able to do things as good as they can. I guess maybe I like Worth Junior the best." She finished her milk in three gulps and called Ada to bring her some more.

Grandma just listened and nodded. Scotty couldn't tell what she was thinking. "But what do you *do* all day? You've been visiting me nearly a month now, and you've spent *all* your time with those boys. What do you *do*?"

Just like a grown person, asking "What do you do?" It was like saying "What did you talk about?" "Well, there's Mike's white mice and his turtle—and now the rabbit—that we take care of, then sometimes we build model airplanes over in the boys' room. Worth Junior has a big one with a gas engine, and is it a beauty!" She covered the rest of her beans with her mashed potatoes. "Sometimes we make things—like telegraph sets and things—and then sometimes Worth Junior goes off with his friends hunting or to fly his plane or something, and Mike and I make up things to do. But Mike wouldn't let Worth Junior know about that for anything. He's so scared he'll think he's a sissy." She stopped helplessly then. "Oh, I don't know what all we do, Grandma, but we always do something."

Her grandmother took a deep breath and said "Ellen—" and Scotty knew she was in for it.

"Yes'm?" she said dutifully.

Grandma smoothed her hair back carefully the way she always did at times like this. "I'm sure those Allison boys are nice boys or I wouldn't let you play with them, and I'm sure you wouldn't want to—but you're becoming a young lady now, you'll be thirteen in a few months, and I think it's time you stopped running around in shorts and playing with little boys all the time. You—"

"But Grandma—" Scotty burst out. "We don't 'play' and they aren't 'little' boys, and—"

"Just a minute," Grandma broke in. "Don't you know it's very rude to interrupt anyone who is speaking, especially an older person? You have been behaving like a little urchin and I don't like it and I'm sure your mother wouldn't be pleased either. I'm only telling you all this for your own good. Try to understand."

No use to argue. No use to even say anything. It was no use. She wouldn't understand. Grandma probably sat around in a hooped skirt painting pictures all her life till Grandpa came along. Well, *by gosh*, she wasn't going to be like that.

"Ellen, did you hear me?"

Of course she heard her. So did Ada too, probably. "Yes'm. Excuse me, please." She pushed her chair back quickly.

"Where are you going?"

"Out," she said, and left the room.

She ran outside and climbed the steps to the tree house before her grandmother would have time to leave the table. Just because she didn't happen to be exactly like every other girl her age, just because she didn't care about clothes and things—didn't mean she wasn't grown up. Why she knew lots of things most girls didn't know and never would.

She sat there for a long time, just enjoying *being* there because Grandma had forbidden her to, and wishing Worth Junior were there so she could tell him.

Finally she climbed down, slowly, almost hoping Grandma would see her. She went back into the

house and went to her room. There wasn't anything to do—nothing was as much fun without the boys. Finally she got out a book and began to read. It was a pretty good book, but she wished she had her model plane to work on. She had almost finished it, and it was pretty good and Worth Junior told her she might be able to enter it in the contest next week. Gosh, Worth Junior knew an awful lot about airplanes . . .

The first time she'd seen the boys they were out in their front yard trying out one of Mike's planes (the kind with a wind-up rubber band). She sat on the porch steps watching them, and wondering who they were and if they'd get to be friends. Worth Junior sailed the plane high and it turned a beautiful flip and landed almost at her feet. He came over to get it and she picked it up and handed it to him. "It sure is a nice one," she had said longingly. He'd asked if she liked planes and she'd said Oh yes and then he said "Would you like to sail this one?" She had jumped up saying "Sure!" and had gone back over into their yard with him. Mike didn't much want her to sail it at first, but he changed pretty quick when she sailed it higher than either one of them had and it made a perfect landing. They'd been friends ever since.

The next morning her mother had said, "Who is that tall boy with the blonde hair and blue eyes you were talking to yesterday?"

Scotty had been puzzled for a minute, then she'd said, "Oh, that's just Worth Junior. He lives next door." Her mother had smiled and not said any more.

That afternoon Scotty and Worth Junior were playing Chinese checkers on the porch when Mrs. Burton had called Scotty into the house to say good-bye. She'd kissed Scotty on the top of her head and said, "Be good, little girl, and don't grow up while I'm gone."

Scotty had grinned and said "Okay," but she hadn't understood. After all, a month certainly wasn't long enough for a person to grow very much . . .

She wished people would stop thinking so much about her growing up, anyway. It was awful—There was grandma always telling her she should act more grown up and her mother being afraid she would. Worth Junior alone didn't seem to care about it. If she had had a brother, she'd want him to be just like Worth Junior. She stretched out on her stomach on the bed and started reading.

She'd read practically all the afternoon when she heard the string pulley click outside her window. (She and the boys had rigged up the pulley between the two houses so they could leave messages for each other.) She got up slowly and went over and unhooked the screen. She looked over at the boys' house but didn't see anybody. Probably Mike wanted some help with his airplane. She took the folded piece of paper out of the box and read it:

Hi Scotty,

Why don't you come out for awhile after supper? I'll be in the back yard.

Worth Jr.

Grandma didn't much like for her to go out after supper, but she was tired of the house. She wrote back:

See you there.

Scotty

She pulled the other string till she heard the box click on the other end. She waited for a minute but didn't see Worth Junior, so she left the bedroom and headed for the kitchen. She got out bread and peanut butter and fig preserves and made a sandwich, then poured a big glass of milk to go with it. She was glad Ada wasn't there to scold her. It was almost time for supper but she didn't care.

Just then her grandmother came in from the back yard. "Ellen," she said, "Ada washed some of your clothes before she left and hung them out. I wish you'd go bring them in, then we can start supper."

(Continued on Page 16)

## The Desired

by MONTAE IMBT

I say I do not remember  
For now, the shadows are pale  
Your hand in mine, I do not seek  
the night  
For the night is full upon us  
From the gold into the silver  
And there are no tears to fall within  
the darkness.  
From the actual unto the image  
We go thus.  
The door has closed behind us  
And we must not trespass back.  
This is the desired  
And recollection is remorse.

# Charlie My Boy

by ELIZABETH POPLIN

**I**n middle Georgia, or more particularly in Wheeler County, everyone knew what everyone else meant when they said "like Charlie Kent." In fact, no one said "going to town like a drunk Indian on Saturday afternoon" anymore; they said "like Charlie Kent behind a red mare."

At our house when the subject was mentioned, Mother always said she hoped this time it would not be a case of "like father like son" for Charlie Kent, Junior. Then, if Father was not there, she always put her arms around Brother and looked at the rest of us and said, "But you couldn't expect too much of a boy whose father had been known to carry a dead fish in his pocket just to worry his wife. And that wasn't the worst of it either if the truth be known!" She always ended up with how Brother, and the rest of us too, should be proud and thankful for our own Father.

This all took place before Charlie started coming to our house with Sister's crowd every Saturday night.

Mother got worried then, and I could not figure out exactly why. I knew the Kents did not have much land now; but Mother and Dicie Kent, Aunt Dicie as I called her, were the best of friends. They were always visiting and exchanging quilt patterns and recipes. Of course there was all that talk about Charlie's father and something that happened a long time ago, but Charlie seemed to be a nice enough boy; and I could not see why she should take on so about him. Charlie had a way with horses and a voice on a ballad that made all Sister's girl friends reach for smelling salts and fans. Mother said both of these talents which I found so charming had come from his father and before that she was sure they had come straight from the Devil.

About this time Daddy was getting interested in raising stock, and he was spending a lot of time reading up on it in the *Stockman's Journal* and certain pages of *The Country Gentleman*. Charlie seemed to be interested in stock farming, too. Anyway he began coming to our house in the afternoons, and he and Daddy sat in the fireroom, talking about how Herefords were the best beef cows but that for milk output you had to crossbreed them with a brindle or you didn't have much.

We had always had a few cows on the place, mostly white face Herefords, so Daddy decided to add to what he had already, rather than fooling with anything else. He bought two hundred head, and Charlie began to hang around the lot-yard and help him with them.

I went down one afternoon to watch them dip the new ones. Zel would not come with me. She said it was unladylike and anyway she did not like to see the poor cows nearly drowning in that awful black

water. I told her she was silly and that she had it all wrong. The dip is not that deep although Mother never would let us play around there for fear we would fall in. Of course the cows do not like it, and they have to be pushed into the fenced-in runway that leads up to the dip in a single file; but they don't nearly drown. I guess Zel just did not like hearing them bellow so loud and seeing them strain to keep their heads above the water so that their eyes bulge and roll around. They do look scared, but Charlie said it wouldn't hurt them a bit and that it would keep them from having Something.

There wasn't much to do at the Kents' place, Aunt Dicie not having much land, so Daddy took Charlie on around our farm and treated him just like Brother.

He let Charlie have five of the new steers and the back pasture to raise them in. When county fair time came around, it was Charlie that rounded up "Prince," our purebred bull, and polished his hooves and scrubbed the white curly hair on "Prince's" broad, flat face. Every year as far back as I could remember "Prince" had taken the blue ribbon, and I guess I had forgotten that I could get excited about him winning. But when Charlie came leading him up to the gate with the blue streamer dangling from the halter, it was like the first time he'd won it all over again.

Zel was happy as a kitten in the sunshine. More for Charlie than "Prince," of course; but she could not very well show Charlie how she felt with Mother and Daddy on the porch behind them. So she just threw her arms around Prince's neck and tried to hug him. He did not like it much and shook his big head and moved off toward the lot-yard gate, slow and heavy.

I was really proud of Charlie these days. Things were doing fine. But you could not convince Mother, she still held back, Ryals like. I think she got kind of tired of me going around with an "I-told-you-so" expression on my face. One day she flared up at me.

"Anyone would think you'd *hatched* him, Marion!" she said.

Mother is a pretty smart woman and since Charlie had not really done anything to make her afraid of his keeping company with Sister, I decided she must be afraid of the Charlie potential. I figured that she would like a chance to discuss whatever it was that was bothering her with somebody, and it was no use trying to talk to Sister, so I asked her why she did not like Charlie. We talked a long time.

Mother, whose name had been Ramey Ryals, and Dicie Scarborough Kent had been best friends and the prettiest girls in the county. They were real belles. At that time Granddaddy and Mr. Scarborough used to go to Savannah every week. They always brought

home something for the girls. A fur neckpiece or a tiny watch no bigger than a thimble that hung on a chain. Ramey got the first gabardine suit in the county that way.

One time the surprise was so big that it had to be carried in a wagon by itself. It was an organ for the front parlor. Ramey and Dicie learned to play it together and soon they knew all the church hymns as well as "The Last Rose of Summer" and a daring new song called "Tessie, You're the Only, Only Girl." They had that record on the Melodian, and I think they picked it out on the organ by ear after a certain young man indicated a preference for it.

All the young crowd in the county started coming to the house on Saturday nights. Ramey Ryals' sings were the place to go. But you had to be asked. Not particularly by Ramey or Dicie but by someone who knew them well enough to take that liberty. Mother says she has forgotten and so has everyone else who asked Charlie Kent there the first time, but after the first time he became a regular caller.

Dicie in soft messaline silk was taking her turn at the organ when Charlie made his entrance into the parlor. The group around the organ made a place for him which he managed to have be the place at the organist's elbow. When Dicie reached out to turn the page, Charlie was quicker. He caught the tips of her fingers in his palm and placed them on the keys again, noticing the flush which started at the back of her neck and smiling.

When she stumbled for a moment during a chorus of a new song someone had brought along, he unhesitatingly struck the chord for her. His coat sleeve brushed across her shoulder when he reached for the chord and the ruffles on her net capelet stood on end. She finished the song and smiled at him over her shoulder while settling the upturned ruffles with a quick movement of one hand.

She asked if he too played the organ. He confessed that if it pleased her that he *did* play—but only a little and that he would have much more pleasure in listening to her.

Dicie, however, feigned fatigue and, rubbing her wrists in a dainty way, abandoned the bench to Mr. Kent.

"Who is he, Ramey?" Dicie demanded, bending over the tea table at the other end of the room.

Ramey handed her a platter of cakes to pass around. "I've been asking everyone. His name's Charlie Kent. He's from Atlanta as near as anyone can figure. Papa says he shouldn't be surprised if he'd been run out of town since no one can get him to say what he did there. But who asked him here is what I'd like to know!" She jerked the teapot off its stand and poured a cup almost too full.

In the middle of the room Make Currie was clapping his hands for attention. "Folks, how would you like to hear someone who's just come down from Atlanta sing us a little ballad that's all the rage up there now? Charlie, boy, how about it?"

Charlie stood up, rested one hand on the organ beside him and sort of half bowed. His suit was cut perfectly for this part.

"If I may dedicate it to Miss Dicie Scarborough," he said, seating himself.

Ramey gasped and started at her friend along with everyone else.

About ten o'clock when the party began to break up, Charlie found Dicie alone although she deliberately busied herself with getting everyone's wraps.

"May I drive you home, Miss Scarborough?" he asked, taking from her hands the coat she had flung up like a protective rampart in front of herself.

"No—I. That is—I always spend Saturday night here with Ramey."

Charlie had gotten rid of the coat. "Then may I call for both of you in time for church tomorrow afternoon?"

Ramey was calling from the front hall, and Dicie turned to go without answering.

He caught her arm. "No, no. Not until you consent."

Dicie smiled and fled. Next afternoon Charlie came, and the three of them went to church.

Now you see what Mother meant when she said that the new parlor organ started everything that happened afterward. But it was really that and other things like what happened at the opening of the Wheeler-Vernon County bridge.

I have mentioned that Mother and Dicie were the belles of the county (and of the two counties after the bridge was opened) so that it was no occasion for surprise when Ramey Ryals and Dicie Scarborough were chosen as sponsors from our county for the ceremony.

The bridge-opening was going to be a big affair. The governor himself was coming. Besides Ramey being one of the sponsors, what made the occasion such a family affair was that the governor was going to ride in our car. Grandpa had just bought a Willys-Knight, the newest machine on the road then and the only one in our county. Since he had the finest automobile and his daughter was one of the sponsors, Grandpa was selected to carry the governor to the ceremony. That meant that our car would be the first one to cross on the new bridge.

The day of the bridge-opening ceremony was the beautiful one that had been hoped for. Ramey and Dicie in dresses of white Crepe de Chine straight from Wanamaker's ladies' catalogue looked entirely feminine and charming. Their gowns neither dared too little nor too much, both of which courses the catalogue warned against. The grace of their dresses showed that Ramey and Dicie had consulted the "Recognized Authority" that the catalogue had recommended.

The scene at the bridge was a gay one. People in buggies, wagons, automobiles, and some just standing lined the road for a mile on each side. Across the middle of the bridge was stretched a braided streamer

of red, white and blue ribbons which was to be cut by the governor as he drove slowly across the bridge at the conclusion of the ceremony. The bridge itself was draped in bunting, and the American flag and the Georgia state flag were displayed together on one side. On our side of the bridge a ramp had been constructed at a very slight angle onto which the car carrying the governor and sponsors was to be driven. From this ramp the governor was to deliver his speech, at the end of which the car would move slowly off the ramp and across the bridge. The governor would cut the streamers, giving the ends of them to Ramey and Dicie to hold. The bridge between Wheeler and Vernon counties would be opened.

The first thing that Dicie saw when the Willys-Knight drove up on the ramp overlooking the bridge was that Charlie Kent's buggy and red mare was the first vehicle next to the bridge. Noticing this made her nervous. She could hardly keep still in the back seat as the governor stood up and began his speech. After all you never could tell what Charlie might do, and everyone knew *that* mare had a head of her own.

Dicie looked at them again. The mare was being as quiet as Jeb's old mule. Charlie winked at her. She blushed and jerked her head up to look at the governor. He was through. The crowd was clapping and shouting. He was bowing. Ramey's father was getting out to crank up the car. In a matter of minutes they would be across the bridge, and the ceremony would all be over. The crowd waited. Ramey's father gave the crank handle a twist. Unexpectedly the engine of the Willys-Knight coughed. Charlie's mare skidded sideways. There was a high-pitched neigh. Up came the red mare's head. She grabbed the bit in her teeth and started off at a canter. Her hooves hit the concrete approach to the bridge. She became more frightened. She galloped.

Charlie was putting on a fine show. He was standing up in the buggy, whip in hand, streamers on it flying. He was smiling and holding the reins correctly. He was indulging in none of the threats and curses that usually follow a runaway.

They were almost to the middle of the bridge. The mare saw the streamer stretched across her path. She reared slightly, then plunged through it and galloped across the other half of the bridge. On the Vernon County side Charlie jerked his mare to a halt so abruptly that she went down on her haunches. The bridge had been opened.

After this you'd have thought that Charlie Kent had "ripped his britches" so to speak in this county. But this was not true; he was more popular than ever. I think some people—I'm not saying of what sort—even admired his daring. Mother claims to this day that she heard several shouts of "Hooray for Charlie and the red mare."

Soon after the bridge incident, Charlie and Dicie were married. The whole county was shocked, of course. But the strangest thing was not their marriage. It was what happened to Charlie after it.

Mr. Scarborough, Dicie's father, was one of the "big" farmers in our county. I guess he just took it for granted that anyone who'd marry his daughter and settle down here—even Charlie—wanted to farm. Anyway when he died not long after Dicie's marriage, he left all his land—pasture and timber—to Charlie and Dicie. Charlie was all for moving into a house in town and hiring an overseer for the farm. Anybody with half an eye could see that he was not a farmer. Mother says that he wanted to open up a movie house like the one in Vidalia. He even asked Grandpa to buy a half interest.

Dicie would not hear to any of these proposals. The old house was her home, and she was going to live in it. As for the farm and timberland, it was only natural for Mr. Kent, as she called him, to assume personal management.

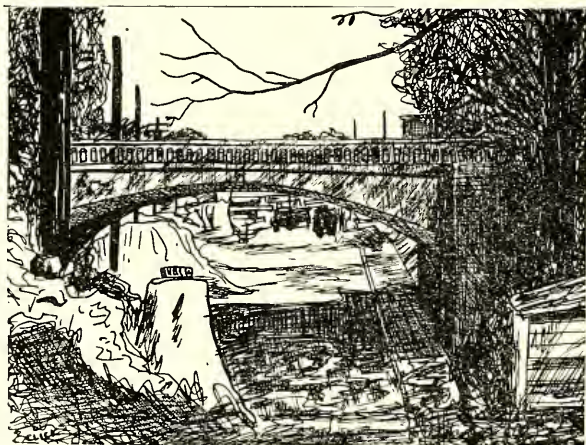
That was the first thing that surprised everyone. He did take on the farm. From her kitchen windows, Ramey could see him drive by in the buggy behind the red mare every morning going up to the other farm.

"He's the same dandy as ever," she thought. He still had the same exaggerated cut to his suits and the same thin soles on his shoes. The buggy whip still went braided with bright ribbons.

The whole town, Ramey told Dicie later, had expected Charlie to kick over his traces and ball the Jack like that red mare of his for Atlanta or wherever he had come from. And several people were still of the opinion that something was bound to happen "sooner or later."

When Ramey reported this to Dicie in her kitchen on their regular visiting afternoon, Dicie said nothing. She only smiled calmly at the thin china plate she was drying and set it down on the table. She then walked over and took Ramey's hand in both of hers.

"We're going to have a child," she said.



THE BRIDGE, by Margaret Click

The "something" that a few had predicted did happen. But it was still not quite what the town expected. Dicie was entertaining at a Sunday dinner before church for Ramey and Wallace who were the newly married Curries. It was certainly unfortunate that the grubbing for Charlie's peanut crop had to be done at that particular time.

"It just couldn't be helped, darling," Charlie said to Dicie as they dressed. "I've got to get those peanuts out of the ground." He turned from the mirror still struggling with his collar button to stare at the sky. "It's going to rain again tomorrow *sure*, if not today. You know how wet the ground is already. Those peanuts are rotting in the shell."

Dicie came over, fastened the stud, and stood looking up at him, not smiling.

"But I don't have to explain things to the farmer's daughter, do I?" He laughed, took her gently by the shoulders and gave her a little shake to make her blink her eyes and smile.

"No, you don't," she said and turned away.

Charlie put on his coat. He grasped both lapels and settled it with a smart shrug of his shoulders.

"Be back in time for your company," he said.

Dinner had been laid for half an hour, and Ramey and Wallace had been in the front parlor with Dicie for longer than that when Charlie came in through the kitchen. Dicie excused herself and went out to him.

"Ramey and Wallace here?" he greeted her. He advanced to kiss her, but Dicie, seeing his hands, black and dirty with the soil of the peanut patch, backed away.

"Have you looked at your suit, Mr. Kent?" Dicie's voice was controlled.

Charlie's was not. "Well, if I didn't have this damned farm of yours to look after, it wouldn't look like this. You don't think I like it, do you?" He stood on one foot and knocked a clod of red clay from the heel of his shoe.

"You don't *have* to wear your best clothes to farm in, you know. There's no law about it." Dicie's voice was even lower than before, and she turned to go back to the parlor.

"All right!" Charlie shouted after her. "I'm sick and tired of you complaining about what I wear. From now on everything is going to be just like *you* want it. If I'm going to be a farmer, by God, I'm going to *look* like one!"

At the dinner table that day Charlie appeared in the only outfit of clothes the county ever saw him in again: bib overalls and an old black hat. Rumor has it that the old hat was the first thing he reached for on arising in the morning, and that he never removed it until after he took off his shoes at night.

To be sure, the overalls he wore were always creased like a dress suit and starched and ironed. Mother says that Dicie ironed them herself after times got bad with them. On Sundays he changed into a dress shirt

and tie and thin sole shoes, but he never changed from the overalls.

About the same time he started using plug tobacco although Ramey and his wife both remembered his surprise and disgust the first time he went to church at the chewing and spitting that went on there. He used Red Bull Brand that came in a package sealed with a tiny red metal tag like a bull. The children in our family loved to play in the Kents' backyard. The ground in the whole area around the back porch was covered with these little metal tags. He always came to the back door to open his tobacco.

Charlie was not a good farmer. He did not know how to make money off the land. His corn sold for the same price every year regardless of the market. His corn was a dollar a bushel if the market was seventy-five cents, and his corn was still a dollar a bushel if the market was getting three dollars and seventy-five cents. Charlie said that his corn was worth a dollar a bushel. He always paid for his fertilizer in advance. Although Wallace, Ramey's husband, tried to explain to him that no self-respecting farmer ever paid for that until the crop was in. That kind of dealing was for tenants. But Charlie paid cash in full. He bought everything that way. If he could not pay cash, he did not buy. And another thing. He would not take chances any more. At least not small chances like laying in the big front field in watermelons, hoping the market would hold this year and they could sell them for five hundred dollars a car load. He seemed to have lost that "happy-go-lucky, lay-you-five-to-one-in-a-minute" attitude he had had in the days before he married Dicie. But if you farm and make money you've got to take chances, so Charlie, though he tried as hard as anyone could, went from bad to worse, as they say.

One field after another was sold to make enough to pay for what the crop should have brought. Ramey's husband bought most of the Scarborough land as it was called in the county. (No one would ever have thought of calling it the Kent land.) Finally only the timber was left them.

Besides the new experience of wondering where money was coming from day to day, Dicie had a feeling that something else was going to happen. She knew that all this conservatism was going against the grain with her husband. Charlie really was not like that. There inside him all this carefulness and penny-pinching he was having to do was building up a pressure, and one day the top was going to blow off.

Dicie raised her head off the pillow and ran a restless hand over the damp hair on the back of her neck. She was too tired to worry about Charlie and what he might do now. Her confinement had begun yesterday. In the first months she had hoped it would be little Charlie, but now she did not care. She was at Ramey's. Dear, sweet, proper Ramey who had insisted that it would not be right for her to be in the house alone with old Doctor Rivers when the baby came. Dicie knew that what she really meant was that there might not be anyone there to keep the

wood box filled and the fire going and the right food fixed for her. But she just could not care about that either right now.

Charlie Kent never knew that he had a son. I mean he did not find out in the usual way by being present when the doctor came out of the bedroom at Ramey's. He was out of the county by then. Out and gone with several thousand dollars, the money for their timber which he sold to some passing saw mill agents, in his pocket.

The two men on the steps of the First Citizens Bank & Trust Co. whose occupation was recording the goings and comings of everybody in that neck of the county watched Charlie Kent drive out that afternoon. The buggy and red mare moved down the center of the street at a smart trot, ribbons flying. Charlie, his black coat opened to show the trim closeness of the vest underneath, waved the buggy whip in passing. The red mare was having things her own way this afternoon. Look at the set of those little ears. Damned if she wasn't vain! He flicked the buggy whip across the top of them to show her that he was still doing the driving.

When Wallace went up to the Scarborough place that night to see why Charlie had not come to be with Dicie, the house was empty. In a heap on the floor in their room were Charlie's old overalls and hat. Nothing was gone that had belonged to him except one suit of clothes and a pair of gold cuff links.

The night Sister came home married to her Charlie Kent I was sent to Uncle Make Currie's to spend the night. (Uncle Make was Daddy's older brother. His real name was Malcolm, but only his wife called him that.) Mother must have wanted me out of the house before Daddy came back from Vidalia.

When Zel came in with Charlie, Mother had taken her and gone directly to her room. Before the door shut, I heard Mother say that she'd never wanted any of her girls to go through with what Dicie Kent had.

As Uncle Make hurried me out the front door, I strained to see through the lace curtains on the closed parlor doors. I got the impression of Charlie seated in the middle of the sofa with his hat beside him. He did not look dangerous enough for all this fuss to be made over him. From Mother's tone you would have thought Sister had gotten a monster instead of somebody we all knew. When I peeked at him, I think I half expected to see Charlie with two heads or at least a black curly movie villain's mustache now that he'd run away with Zel. He had not changed a bit as far as I could see, but then I wasn't close enough to tell.

Uncle Make's wife put me to bed in the front bed room reserved for guests. I knew what to expect before I piled into bed, even though Uncle Make's wife made her beds up so smooth you could hardly tell the difference. I threw back the crocheted spread and sheet and sank into her feather mattress. In July I did not appreciate their downy closeness. I flung the

two big pillows onto the foot of the bed which was as broad as a shelf and supported by columns.

Flailing with both arms, I beat down one side of the mattress into a manageable thickness and rolled into it on my side. It was my policy in dealing with this feather bed to sleep on my side so that my nose could sort of hang off the side of the bed to encounter something besides a downy surface. There was another angle to be considered too in sleeping in this bed. If I slept on my back, I had to stare straight up into the carved face that leered down from the heights of the head of the bedstead. Former experiences had taught me better than that. If I could just not see him until I got in bed I was O.K. But that was a pretty hard job and the rest of the furniture didn't help much, having mirrors in such odd places. The old wardrobe was bad enough with two round mirrors right at my eye level, but the bureau with its full length pier glass was the worst of all. I'd go through all my getting ready for bed—washing and everything—pretending I was wearing blinkers like a mule and could not see on either side of me. Then just when I was ready to hop in bed, I would catch sight of his face in the bureau mirror as I bent over to blow out the lamp.

Tonight I could not get myself scared of him. I guess I had too much else to think about. Sister's running away and marrying Charlie Kent's son and all that. I did not go to sleep for a long time. I decided that Mother was taking Zel's marrying the wrong way. It seems that everytime someone in our family gets married someone else objects. And there is always so much talk. I guess there's no pleasing everyone. That kind of feeling wears off though with use like the red paint on the spoon handles from the chain store.

They say that the family objected when Uncle Make married. Uncle Make's real "sweetheart" died of consumption before they could be married. After that he seemed to have lost interest in women for a long time. Maybe it was a shock to everyone when he married a postmistress from a town three counties south of ours. But I should think they would be glad he married because we've got one old bachelor in the family, my great-uncle Cecil, who is of no use to anyone.

When I asked Mother why the family objected she just said she didn't know. She thinks maybe it was because she did things differently in keeping house. That was only after they were first married, though, and everybody likes her now. Maybe it was because of that odd piece of furniture for the parlor that she brought with her. It was a family tree made out of locks of the hair of all the members of her family. The pieces were braided separately into designs and all wired together some way and tied with ribbons. There were white ribbons in lovers knots around the marriages in the family and lots of pink and blue ribbons for the children. I got a kind of horrid sat-

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# The Little Barber

by ANN POLLARD

MAX peeped through the curtain of the booth. He saw Mr. Angel standing in the middle of the new beauty salon with his chest pushed out and hands in his pocket. Angel's dark eyes flashed around the room. Everything was perfect for the grand opening.

Angel hurried around the room, pretending to make last minute changes. Max listened to him as he snapped orders to the girls.

"On your toes, my pretty little dolls. Let these people know a good thing when they see it. Be cordial, attractive, and for God's sake watch your English. I want a little class and sophistication around here. Remember, this may be only the beginning. Where the devil is Max? Never around when I need him."

Max, startled, jumped a little, then stepped out from behind the curtain.

"Here I am, Mr. Angel. Did you want me?"

"Well, Max, my little barber, how does it look now? You're the artist. Everything perfect?"

"Perfect to me, Sir."

"What time is it?"

"2:15."

"Fifteen more minutes and the doors open. This is it, Max. From now on the going is up. You'll see."

Two-thirty arrived, and women began pouring into the new beauty salon. Angel was in his glory. His tongue was honey-covered.

Max watched him and felt disgusted.

Mr. Angel was right, for the Salon's opening was a success. A profitable flow of business began almost immediately. Each day the appointment book was filled. Sometimes Max stayed after hours, because Mr. Angel said a good customer was more important than eating supper on time. Besides, Max wasn't married so he didn't have to be anywhere particularly.

Angel's girls were efficient and worked hard. Everyone worked hard, and it brought results for Mr. Angel.

He always enjoyed walking back and forth down the row of booths. Parting the curtains he would peep in upon the ladies.

"And how is my lovely lady today? Is everything going all right?"

"Honey, we'll cut it just like you want it. Okay? What makes you happy will make me happy and I want you to be happy. You know that, don't you? Isn't that right? Hum?"

"Max, come here a minute. Just look at this lovely hair. Now isn't she a lovely lady. Isn't she now? Honey, you're a pretty, lovely lady, and I like you a lot. Did you know that? Just look at those eyes! Lovely. Just lovely."

And all the while he talked he delighted in his own reflection in the mirror.

The evenings Max worked late, he stopped by Marve's Grill for supper. Marvin, the owner, a dark, heavy-set man, was always glad to see Max come through the door.

"Little Max, you tired. Marve'll fix you a good bowl of vegetable soup. That'll warm your guts and rest your bones. Okay?"

Marvin would smile kindly on Max as he slipped onto a stool by the counter. He would disappear for a moment and then come back with a bowl of steaming soup.

If Marvin were not busy, after Max had eaten, he would bring two cups of hot coffee, and together they would sit and talk, sometimes for hours, about business, politics, God, and women. It made them both feel secure. Neither wanted to be alone in the world.

It was a raw Saturday in December when one likes to be on the inside looking out. Only a few operators waiting for permanents to dry remained. Looking on the appointment book, Max saw that he had one more customer. The appointment was for 5:30, and it was almost six. He sat behind the counter smoking a cigarette. He heard the door open and felt a gust of the cold, damp air. The girl crossed the room taking long strides.

She was beautiful. It was a strange beauty. He was aware of the loveliness, yet only the impression remained. He could recall the round curve of the cheeks when the mouth smiled, or the large, intelligent eyes as they looked straight into his. Yet in remembering the whole it was like catching a glimpse of a passing face that looked through the hazy glass of a bus as it drove through a town.

After she left, Max couldn't forget her. Her face was beautiful, arousing awe in him, haunting his mind.

He left the Salon and started toward Marve's. Suddenly he changed his mind. He didn't want to see Marve tonight. Pulling the collar of his overcoat up, he turned toward the wind and walked to the boarding house where he lived.

He undressed and laid his clothes on a chair. He sat on the bed and knew shame as he looked at his worn trouser cuffs and coat collar. All of a sudden he felt inefficient and lonesome. He hated his life because he was poor and insignificant. A bitterness arose in his small body, because he knew Mr. Angel was becoming rich, yet month after month he, Max, made the same wages. He wanted to leave, but was afraid of new people. He felt the stiffness creeping up his spine. He thought of the girl and was afraid. His hands trembled.

Max crawled into his bed, pulled the covers over his head and cupped his ears with his hands. He

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# The Special Day

(Continued from Page 9)

"All right," Scotty said. "What're we having?"

"You know perfectly well you shouldn't be eating sandwiches this near dinner. I've told you—"

"It's only one sandwich. What're we having?"

"Oh, I don't know—the rest of the roast beef and I think I told Ada to make a banana pudding—"

"Gosh, thanks, Grandma!" It was her favorite dessert. "I'll be back in a second!" She gulped the rest of her milk and went out the back door.

The light was on in Worth Junior's room and she could see him working on his plane—only he didn't seem to be doing anything, just sitting there . . . It didn't take her long to gather up the clothes. She carried them back into the kitchen, where Grandma had already started supper.

"That's a good girl," Grandma said. "Now you can start setting the table."

After supper Scotty offered to wash the dishes, and she even put them away. Grandma seemed pleased and told Scotty she was going to her room to lie down.

"I *may* go out for a while," Scotty said uncertainly.

"You know I don't like you out at night," Grandma said, frowning.

"I helped Ada with lunch and brought in the clothes and set the table and washed the dishes and dried them and put them away," Scotty said, making it sound as long as possible. "Please can't I go out for awhile?"

Grandma smiled a little and said, "Oh, all right, I suppose so. But be back in this house by nine-thirty, not a minute later."

"Thanks, Grandma, I'll be here."

It was almost dark. She found Worth Junior sitting cross-legged on the grass by the rabbit pen. He looked up. "You must've eaten an awful big supper," he grinned.

"Oh, I washed the dishes for Grandma afterwards," Scotty said carelessly. "Where's Mike?"

"Gone to scout meeting."

Scotty sat down beside him and stuck her finger through the wire of the pen. The rabbit hopped over and began to sniff it.

They just sat there for awhile not saying anything. "You get my message?" Worth Junior said suddenly.

"Course I did, stupid. I answered it, didn't I?"

"Oh—yeah—that's right." He stretched out at full length on the grass beside her.

"Do you think maybe I can finish my plane in the morning?" Scotty said.

"Sure, if you've got enough dope."

"That's a swell board you fixed for me to work on."

"It isn't much, but you can stick pins in it."

"Guess who's coming tomorrow, Worth Junior? My mother!"

"That's swell. Does that mean you'll be leaving soon?"

"In a few days, I guess."

He didn't say anything for a long time, he just lay there staring straight up at the stars. Finally he said, "See those three stars up there, kind of in a straight line?" He pointed.

Scotty looked up and tried to pick them out. "There?"

"No." He caught her arm and pointed it. "There."

"Oh, I see them."

"Well, that's part of a group of stars called Orion. He's a hunter, and those stars are his belt. See the big one near them? That's his sword."

"Oh, golly, now I'm beginning to see him!"

He went on talking and told her lots about the stars, showing her more groups that made pictures, and telling her stories about some of them. Gosh, she didn't know he knew so much about stars and things like that. She just sat without saying anything while he talked, liking to listen.

"Did you ever see pictures of the moon close up, Scotty?"

"A couple—in my science book."

"When I was little I wanted more than anything else in the world to go to the moon. I always planned to build an airplane that could take me there."

"That would be fun—but gosh, I'd be scared!" Scotty said.

"I wouldn't let anything happen to you."

Scotty looked at him. "Huh! What could you do if a man from Mars started after us?"

"Oh, I don't know—I guess I'd do something pretty quick, though." He smiled in the near-darkness, and Scotty wondered what he was smiling at. "Hey, Scotty, let's hike out to the lake tomorrow and go swimming—"

"Can't. Grandma wouldn't let me, and besides, my mother's coming."

"Oh."

"I guess I'd better be going in, Worth Junior. Grandma made me promise I'd be in by nine-thirty, and we've been out here a long time." Scotty got to her feet.

"Yeah, I guess we have." He stood up slowly. They started walking back toward Scotty's front door. "It's nice out here at night. Let's do this some more."

"Sure, I like it, too," Scotty agreed.

He walked with her to the door and stood there till she closed it behind her. He was a funny boy—he was so smart about airplanes and making things, but he liked to talk about stars and things like that, too . . .

Scotty felt the sun warm and bright on her face before she opened her eyes. She stretched as far as she could and thought, "My mother's coming today." It was a wonderful feeling, and each time she said it it was like she hadn't known before. She lay in bed

smelling the bacon frying and knowing that this was going to be a very special day . . . .

Breakfast was wonderful. Grandma let her have all the pancakes she could hold. She ate just stacks of them with bacon and maple syrup. After that, she went back to her room and put on her favorite blue shorts and a white T-shirt. Her mother was coming today. She took time to comb her hair and tie a blue ribbon around it to hold it back.

Grandma asked her to sprinkle down her clothes and roll them up so Ada could iron them when she finished with the breakfast dishes, but Scotty didn't even mind that. It was a beautiful day, and she almost wished she and Worth Junior and Mike were going out to the lake. You could really get a tan on a day like this.

She found the boys in their front yard. Worth Junior was in his bathing suit mowing the grass, and Mike was pulling weeds out of the flower beds.

"Hi, lazybones!" Worth Junior called when he saw her. He stopped and leaned on the mower, shaking his hair back.

Mike said, "Gosh, you're lazy. We've been working since eight o'clock."

Scotty grinned. "I'm just smart enough to get out of working, that's all." She went over and sat down on the front steps.

Mike grunted and wiped his forehead. Worth Junior went on mowing. Finally he had finished the whole yard, and Mike just stopped. "Few weeds are good for 'em," he told Scotty. "Makes 'em tough."

Worth Junior came over and sat down with them. "Mike, be a sport and go get me a glass of water."

"Hey, whatcha think I am, your slave?" Mike complained.

"Still want me to balance your wings for you?"

"Ah—okay." Mike disappeared into the house.

"Sure would've been a nice day to go to the lake," Scotty said.

Worth Junior stared at the street. "Maybe we could go—"

"Huh?"

"Oh, I was just going to say 'Maybe we could go one day before you leave'."

"Maybe."

Mike brought Worth Junior a big glass of ice water and sat down with them. "Let's go up in the tree house and play some slap-jack," he said. "Maybe it'll be cool up there. Okay?"

They didn't answer him, just got up and the three of them started around to the tree. They sat in the tree house playing cards till Ada called Scotty to lunch. She waited a minute, then climbed down. The boys followed her.

"I'll see you," she said.

Grandma hadn't gotten back from shopping and had phoned Ada to fix Scotty's lunch, so she ate by herself. After lunch she decided to wash her hair because her mother was coming. She got Ada to chip up some Ivory soap and melt it for her shampoo, then

she went to the bathroom lavatory to wash it. It took her a long time, because she couldn't get the soap out. She finally finished and wrapped a towel around her head so that it looked like a turban and went to her room. She combed it out, wishing it were yellow-blond like Worth Junior's or black like Mike's, instead of just an in-between middle color. Anyway, it looked kind of blonde now, because it was sunburned. It at least turned up on the ends so she didn't have to worry about ever rolling it up. She knew it would dry quick because it was so short, so she got a book and sat down on the bed.

The string pulley clicked on her end and Scotty saw the box resting beside the window. She unlatched the screen and took the message out of the box.

Scotty.

Let's go to the show tonight if your grandmother will let you. It's about some people who went to the moon. We talked about it last night, remember?

Worth Jr.

She was puzzled by it. He knew Grandma wouldn't let her go to the show at night—It had been hard enough to get out of the house for a little while last night. And besides, why couldn't they go this afternoon? It cost more at night. Well, he knew her mother was coming, and he probably figured she'd want to be with her this afternoon. She'd ask, but she didn't have much hope.

"Scotty!"

She looked up and there was her mother standing in the doorway. Scotty ran to her and threw her arms around her. "Gosh, I'm so glad you're here!"

"Did you think I could stay away from you any longer?" her mother smiled. "You're so nice and brown!"

"I've been having more fun, Mother!" She knew she wanted to tell her mother about everything.

"What's this?" Her mother reached down and picked up the scrap of paper Scotty had dropped.

"Oh, just a message from Worth Junior he sent on the pulley. Mother, he wants me to go to the show tonight. It's all about the moon, and he knows all about the stars, and—"

"Hold it!" her mother laughed. "Who is Worth Junior, the tall, blonde boy?"

"Yes, Mother. Oh, there's so much to tell you! Do you think I can go, Mother?"

"Why, yes, I think so."

Grandma came in then and Mrs. Burton said, "Why don't we all go downtown this afternoon? I need a new hat and I'd like some good advice."

"Sure," Scotty said. "That'll be fun."

Grandma said she couldn't go, since she had to make a cake for the church supper. Scotty and her mother got ready and left, taking Grandma's car. They went to several stores before Mrs. Burton found what she wanted. It really was fun, watch-

ing Mother try on different hats, and saying, "I don't think that does a *thing* for you, Mrs. Burton," or, "Now that's rather nice on you." When they found the right one, Scotty knew it at once, and said excitedly, "Oh, Mother, that's *it!* That's just exactly it!"

"My daughter has excellent taste," Mrs. Burton told the salesgirl. "I'll take it."

They walked down to the drugstore where Mrs. Burton had a coke and Scotty a chocolate soda. "Are we going home now?" Scotty asked.

"We're in no hurry. Why don't we stop by Marshall's and see if we can find you a dress. You haven't had a new one in a long time."

"But, Mother, I don't need a new dress."

"Well, we probably won't find anything you'd want, but let's look. I like buying clothes for you."

"Oh, all right, Mother." She could wear it the first day of school.

She tried on four or five dresses that she thought were just plain ugly to please her mother and was more than ready to go home when the saleslady said, "Oh, I just happened to think—a few dresses came in today that haven't even been marked. If you'll wait just a minute I'll see if there's anything you can use." She disappeared and came back with only one dress. "This is a very special dress," she smiled. "We have only one." It was a pale pink cotton with a full skirt and pockets.

Mrs. Burton smiled and said, "The color will be nice on you."

Scotty slipped it on, and it was a perfect fit. Pink did make her tan show up nicely.

"It's quite becoming," her mother said, "and it makes you look as brown as an Indian. How do you like it?"

"It's the prettiest one I've tried on," Scotty said. "It fits good, and I like it."

"We'll take it." Her mother nodded to the saleslady, who took the dress and the money and hurried away. They picked it up at the desk and went and got the car, driving straight home.

"I just remembered," Scotty said when they got there. "I never did answer Worth Junior's note."

"Do it right away. I believe you'd better go to the seven o'clock show."

Scotty went to her room and began writing the note. "Wonder why he didn't ask me this morning when I was talking to him?" she called to her mother.

"I wonder myself," her mother called back.

After supper Scotty hurried through her bath and went to her room to dress. Which pair of shorts should she wear—the red ones or the navy ones? Well, anyway, she would wear a white shirt. She had it on and was stepping into the red shorts when her mother appeared in the doorway.

"Scotty, why don't you wear your new dress tonight?" she said lightly, straightening the dresser scarf.

Scotty let go of the shorts in amazement. "But Mother, we're only going to the show—it'd be silly."

"I'd like to see it on you. We'll be going home in the morning and your daddy wants just the three of us to go to the beach for a few days—"

"Oh, gosh, that's wonderful!"

"—and you won't be wearing anything but shorts down there. I might forget what you look like in a dress."

"Well, I guess I might as well. I can wear my white ballets with it."

She got dressed quickly and combed her hair, tying a pink ribbon around it. "You look like a strawberry ice cream cone," her mother smiled. "Come on in the living room and talk to me until he comes."

"Till he *comes*? He isn't coming over here, Mother. We just meet in the yard. It's easier."

"Sit down, Scotty. He'll come to the door for you," her mother said, settling herself comfortably.

Mother sure didn't know Worth Junior very well. Scotty wandered about the living room, examining the water color paintings her grandmother had done when she was a young lady. It was nearly seven. She'd better go on out so she wouldn't miss them—

The doorbell rang loudly. Scotty stared at her mother who only smiled and said, "Open the door, dear."

Scotty pulled the door open and stood there amazed. There stood Worth Junior, his hair combed back, and wearing white pants, a clean white sport shirt, and a dark blue coat.

"Hi," he said, just like always.

"Hi—" Scotty repeated, her voice trailing off. Then remembering her manners, she said, "Come on in and meet my mother."

He came into the living room, looking around him like he'd never seen the place before.

"This—this is Worth Junior, Mother—and this is my mother, Worth Junior—" Scotty stammered.

"Hello, Worth Junior," Mrs. Burton said. "Scotty's been telling me what a grand time she's had since she's been here. I'm so glad there was someone here for her to be friends with."

"Yes'm," said Worth Junior, clearing his throat. "Scotty's getting to be a pretty good model plane builder." He grinned suddenly, the grin Scotty was used to seeing.

"Where's Mike?" she asked.

He looked at her for a minute. "Oh—gone on a camping trip."

Scotty stood there, not knowing anything to say. It was one of those times when there didn't seem to be anything to say.

"I guess we'd better be going if we're going to catch the first show," Worth Junior said finally.

"Sure," Scotty said, "I guess we better. 'Bye, Mother."

"Goodbye, Mrs. Burton. Glad I met you." Worth Junior reached for the door and opened it before Scotty could turn around.

"Lock the door when you come in, Scotty. I'm glad to have met you, too, Worth Junior." Scotty flung a quick look at her mother who was smiling before they went out the door.

It was a nice night—the stars were all out and it was just warm enough. As they walked down the street Worth Junior started talking about how school would be next year. He talked and talked, and Scotty just had to say "Yes" and "No" at the right times—he didn't give her time to say any more. At last they reached the theater and Scotty stopped to look at the pictures. Worth Junior went up to the ticket window and when Scotty heard him say "Two, please," she turned around quickly.

She got her money out of her pocket and held it out to him. "Here," she said. "Thanks for getting it for me."

He ignored her hand. "Dry up, will you?" he grinned. "Come on, or we'll miss the beginning."

Scotty slowly replaced the money and just looked at him. He held the door open and gave her a gentle push. "Hurry up, will you?"

She walked ahead of him into the crowded darkness of the theater and found two seats. "Here," she whispered loudly.

"Go on in," he whispered back.

The movie was just beginning. Scotty tried to prop her knees up on the seat in front of her, but it wasn't comfortable in a dress, so she just sat. The first time someone in the movie made a funny crack Worth Junior turned and looked at her. She looked at him and they laughed together. Every time after that they would turn and look at each other and laugh. Sometimes Worth Junior would say something that was even funnier and Scotty would laugh, trying not to be heard.

Then the scene shifted and there was a love scene. They both looked straight ahead, not saying anything. Scotty finally turned to him to say something, and saw that he wasn't even looking at the movie. She changed her mind. After that he didn't look at her anymore when someone said something funny, and he didn't even laugh . . .

When it was over they got up and walked out, and Worth Junior still didn't say anything. What was wrong? Scotty suddenly felt she'd do anything to make it all right again. They'd been having so much fun—she'd never seen Worth Junior laugh so much, and now he was mad or something, and she didn't know what to do and couldn't ask.

"Wanta stop by the drug for a soda?" he asked when they were outside.

"I don't think I want anything," she managed.

They started walking down the street in silence and Scotty had never wanted to talk so much in all her life. But everything she thought of to say sounded like she'd planned it. It wasn't so far to her grandmother's and they'd walked all the way without saying anything at all.

"Why're you so quiet?" he said suddenly and angrily.

"I don't know of anything to say," Scotty answered truthfully, watching his face.

He just nodded slowly and didn't answer. When they reached the house he walked with her to the front door. The house was dark except for a faint light in the living room.

"Well, I have to go in. It's late," Scotty said. "It was—fun."

"Look—" he began, and turned to face her.

"Okay. I'm looking."

"Scotty, I enjoyed that. I guess—"

"Me, too."

"Shut up a minute, will you?" he said softly and smiled down at her, but it wasn't his usual grin.

"Okay—" She wanted terribly to run away, to make him stop looking at her like that.

He put his hands in his pockets and looked down at the steps. "This month has been fun, Scotty, the most fun I've ever had—"

She just stood there, with a funny, tight feeling beginning to creep over her, and waited for him to finish.

"You'll be going home soon, and I don't guess you'll be coming back till next summer." He took his hands out of his pockets and fumbled with something in the darkness. He looked straight at her then and held out his hand. "Here's my i.d. bracelet, Scotty—My dad gave it to me for my birthday, and—I'd like for you to wear it. You could keep it till you come back—"

Scotty couldn't do a thing but stare at him without moving. He took her hand and then started to drop the bracelet into it, but she jerked it away and stepped back quickly.

"I don't want it, Worth Junior, my gosh, I might lose it or I might not come back and your dad gave it to you so it's yours, and it would be silly for me to take it because it's yours, and something might happen to it—" She stopped because she was out of breath and her voice sounded shaky like she was going to cry. He was standing there still holding the bracelet and smiling at her kind of crookedly.

She turned her head away from him and ran into the house, slamming the door behind her. She ran to her room and fell on the bed, the tears finally overflowing and running down her cheeks.

Everything was ruined . . . everything that had been fun . . . and she wished with all her heart that she'd never come . . . She covered her head with her pillow, whispering "I hate him, I hate him," over and over, and feeling a horrible ache inside her. It would never be the same again. They would be leaving in the morning and he didn't even know she was going and she wouldn't even see him . . .

She lay there, the tears finally stopping, and the last thing she thought of before she fell asleep was a fragile wood and paper airplane sailing out of sight . . .

# The Fuddling Cup

(Continued from Page 5)

"Oh, but Uncle Will, I'd love to know how to swim."

"Well, maybe we can—can run away some day and I'll—teach you."

"But, Grandmother thinks swimming suits are indecent."

"Indecent! Bah! They are just a damn nuisance!"

"Oh, look! There's Miss Sally Sterne—way down the street . . . She's—"

"Sitting on the front porch rocking," contributed Uncle Will.

"How did you know?" asked Margaret Ann with a tone of surprise.

"That's what she was doing this time thirty years ago . . . It's about time for old Judge Adams to come around the corner on his way home."

"Oh, there's the water tank," said Margaret Ann, swinging the telescope around. "I'm right on top of it . . . Whew! I'm getting dizzy!"

"So you like the telescope," said Uncle Will coughing hard, his face turning a purplish red. Then it's all—yours."

"Oh, thank you, thank you . . . But don't you think we better go downstairs now?" she said, seeing him slump against the wall.

"Maybe so, dearie, maybe so. We'll take a look at the eclipse—next week."

"The eclipse? What's . . .?" She did not finish the question but gave her full attention to Uncle Will's unsteady wavering as he started down the ladder-steep steps.

"Better—stop—in your—room," he said, as they arrived at the third floor.

"All right, Uncle Will," she said a little sadly. "And thank you for everything." She laid the telescope down tenderly. She would keep it on the bottom shelf of the bookcase. There would be plenty of room for it there if she moved all those books. She was through with them anyhow—*The Little Colonel* books, *Uncle Remus*, *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and those silly Elsie Dinsmore books . . . How could she ever have suffered over Elsie Dinsmore! she thought as she walked to the door and listened to Uncle Will's faltering steps as he heavily descended to the basement. Surely, he is safe now, she felt as she heard him on the last flight . . . No . . . There was a loud bumping as if he had missed a whole step—maybe two . . . She went out in the hall and leaned over the banister, listening—listening . . . With relief, she heard him continue down the steps and slam the door of his room. Thank goodness! She should never have let him climb way up to the cupola. It would have been all her fault if he had slipped down those rickety steps. Why, she had fallen down steps herself, and she was really much younger than Uncle Will. The thought came to her with the impact of a first realization . . . When she was his age, Uncle

Will would be—be—but she would not think about that.

Picking up the telescope, Margaret Ann went over to the curtained, white bookcase and dropped to her knees on the cool matting which covered the floor. As she removed the books from the bottom shelf, she ran lightly through the pages. A paper doll fluttered out of *Alice in Wonderland*, marking a page on which there was a picture of Alice. She remembered how she had skipped over that page, warned by the paper doll marker. The very idea! The *very idea* of being afraid of Alice with that silly long neck and having nightmares about it. But it was a disagreeable sort of picture . . . She put the paper doll back.

Margaret Ann dropped the book and stood up . . . What in the world was that noise! . . . A scream! . . . Yes—there it was again. She ran to the top of the steps and listened. There was the sound of excited voices and general commotion—in the basement! Something terrible must have happened! . . . She took the steps two at a time, ran through the hall and almost collided with Bessie coming up from below.

"What in the world is the matter?" asked Margaret Ann, alarmed at the look on Bessie's face.

"Somethin' turrrible, Miss Margaret . . . Where's your papa?"

"He's not home yet. What is it, Bessie?"

"Mr. William's done hurt hisself and—"

"Hurt hisself? Right in his own room?"

"Mebbe it's a stroke, him with the high blood," said Bessie breathing hard. "I went to take him his clean wash, and there he was lyin' flat on the floor with the blood runnin'—"

"Blood!" cried Margaret Ann, slipping past Bessie and running down the basement steps.

The other servants were standing over Uncle Will like dazed sheep, fear etched on their ebon faces. Margaret Ann dropped down beside the prostrate two-hundred-and-twenty-five pounds. "*Do something*. Oh, please do *something*! Can't you see he's hurt?" she cried.

"I'll go git a wet rag," said Bessie, scurrying toward the kitchen. "You all try to git his head histed up a little."

Margaret Ann put her arm carefully under Uncle Will's head.

"Hm, hm, hm," lamented Anna, "and such a fine gent'eman."

"He musta butted into this here," said John, setting the little mahogany table upright, "and cut hisself on this contraction." He picked up the jagged pieces of the fuddling-cup.

"Yes, I suppose he did," said Margaret Ann tearfully. She placed the wet cloth tenderly on the cut along Uncle Will's temple . . . "Look! The blood's still coming through! And he won't wake up . . . Oh, what shall we do?"

"You reckon a little blackberry cordial would bring him 'round?" asked Anna more brightly.

"Go way from here," said John. "You think that stuff'll cure anything . . . We got to do somethin' quick now. Dat's too much bleedin' and he's gittin' mighty white."

"Father!" Margaret Ann called loudly, hearing the front door upstairs open. "*Fatber!*"

Father was there in a minute with Mother close behind. Then Grandmother came rustling in, her bonnet slightly askew.

"Oh, Father—" sobbed Margaret Ann. "Please—" "Go call the doctor," Father said to Mother. "And here," he said to the servants, "give me a hand. The four of us can lift him to his bed."

"And *you* had better go to your room, Margaret Ann," said Grandmother, her mouth snapping into a grim line . . . "This is no place for a child—here with this—this—drunken . . ."

"Grandmother!" shrieked Margaret Ann. "He is not—*drunk!* He's sick and only took a little—little—rock and rye!"

Grandmother looked as she might have if the family horse had run away.

"Well, if he is," Father said, adjusting the pillow under Uncle Will's head and dismissing the servants who filed out on tiptoe, "I don't blame him. I think it is our fault. We've given him a pretty raw . . ."

"What are you saying?" snapped Grandmother.

"It's not what I am saying," Father continued, feeling Uncle Will's pulse. "It's what everybody's saying."

"Do—you—mean—that—people—are—criticizing *me?*" exclaimed Grandmother.

"I mean that people are criticizing *us*—letting a member of the family live in his own home like a— a pariah. What would our Scotch ancestors . . .?"

"Oh, please, please . . ." said Mother, turning pale and looking at Father as if she were seeing him for the first time. "The doctor is on his way."

"*Well!* of all things!" said Grandmother. "I would like to know how *they* would handle such stubborn and willful—irresponsibility!"

"Grandmother," said Margaret Ann, standing by wide-eyed and ignored, "I read a fable about the sun and the north wind and how the sun always won because . . ."

"*Margaret Ann!*" said Mother. "*Go—on—to—your—room!*"

Grandmother had not taken her eyes off Father. She went over and sat on the edge of Uncle Will's big chair. Her bonnet had slipped farther down over her right ear. "Are you *sure* that people are saying such things?" she asked, her voice a little shaky.

"You are an unusually—unusually infallible person," Father was saying as Margaret Ann started slowly up the steps. The rest was drowned out by Uncle Will's heavy snore.

Tears held back by the paralysis of fear streamed down her face and mingled with the blood stains on the blue dotted-swiss dress . . . How could she wait here in her room—perhaps for hours—not knowing whether Uncle Will would—would—was all right? And what would happen to Father for calling Grandmother names? But how could Grandmother say such things about her own brother? . . . Scraps of overheard conversation went reeling through her mind, scraps that had lain there like a crazy quilt of questions—things that her Grandmother had said . . . Why, she must have been talking about Uncle Will all the time! The fragments came back to her with new meaning: "roaming the earth," "squandering his fortune," "burying his talents," "riotous living," "involved with that nurse," "black sheep" . . . All this and more Grandmother had said, and now she had called him a drunken—*something*—even when he was lying there bleeding and hurt and maybe—maybe—Margaret Ann jerked the blue ribbon from her hair and threw it on the floor, walked rigidly to the mantel and picked up the photograph of Grandmother. With trembling fingers she held it and stood staring straight into the open fire . . . Turning quickly, she went to the bookcase, slipped the paper doll out of *Alice in Wonderland*—and put Grandmother's picture in its place.



by Jessie Ford

# The Little Barber

(Continued from Page 15)

wanted to drown out the wind, the sounds, the faces. Maybe if he pressed hard all night, by morning the housekeeper would come in his room and find him dead. He wondered what she would do with his old suit.

Sleep of exhaustion spread over him and he dreamt of cities and buildings he had never seen. He lived to awake and know that it was Sunday, and he didn't have to go out in the cold if he didn't want to.

At eleven the landlady knocked on the door.

"Mr. Michael, if you want to eat with us today, dinner is served at 12:30."

Max felt almost guilty because he hadn't died during the night. Now the landlady had nothing to break the monotony of her dull and narrow existence.

He didn't eat in the house, but instead dressed and went out. The sky was overcast and a cold, raw wind gathered papers and leaves on the street and sent them sweeping along. He stopped at Marve's Grill and, wiping the frosty glass pane of the window, peeped in.

He could see Marvin stirring around in the kitchen. It looked warm and friendly inside. He went in.

"Cold out, eh, Max?" said Marvin coming toward him. His large, friendly face was covered with sweat which he wiped off on his sleeve.

"You come for my Italian spaghetti, eh? With plenty of garlic?"

"O.K., Marvin, with plenty of garlic."

When Max had finished eating, Marvin came over with two cups of steaming black coffee.

"What's the matter, Maxy? Something wrong with you? I tell you, I think you work too hard. Not that work ain't good. Take my place here. I work hard and make pretty good. What's important is I like it. See, I like these people that come in. They learn you a lot. I never go far, I mean around the world, but I talk to people what go and it's same as me going. You don't like what you do, then you get old and it ain't like you see the world. This good life and you got to look at it as good life and live it so. It say somewhere in the Bible, don't it, that there's a time for everything. 'A time to live and a time to die.' Now's your time of living, Max. Ain't a bad life. It belongs to you and me, don't it, eh?"

"You're good, Marve. You've got the good things coming. Me, I don't know. I'm not a mixer. There is a longing for things you don't understand. It's a kind of thing that makes you walk out in the cold at night when you don't have to. You find yourself sitting on roof tops at night watching neon signs blink on and off, cars passing, and couples walking by looking in windows at cheap rings and furniture. It hits you on spring nights, too, when breezes are soft and warm and windows are open and curtains wave back and forth. It comes back with the smell of onions frying and stale beer. You find it when little children play jumprope in the streets as the evenings

grow longer. The streetwasher comes by at four o'clock in the morning, and it's lonely because he's riding down the street in the big truck and everybody's sleeping except me and him. It's lonely in November.

"I just want to go away and find bigger places. When you long for things, you've got to find them."

"Where'd you go, Max?"

"I don't know. Maybe New York. That's where most people go, isn't it? Yeah, I've always thought I wanted to go to New York. Funny how people work all their lives to get away and go to a place. Then when they come back, it's all over, and they've nothing to work for. Maybe I oughtn't to go; just look forward to it and plan on getting there someday. But that's not living—it's not knowing and you can't live until you know.

"God, I wish I could get lost in a big place with thousands of people around me, but none too near."

"Maybe I don't understand too well, Max. Then maybe again I do. I've never wanted to leave here, but I've wanted plenty what I never got. Course I got plenty I want because I go out and work for it. But Max, it's this way—you find something else, or when you get older you wants get little. Maybe you get over it. Someday you find a girl and then the old dreams you toss out the window, eh?"

"No, Marve, it's not that. I fell in love yesterday — a beautiful girl, and I'll never forget her face . . ."

"See, it's good. It's like I say, you find somebody and then everything is different."

"No, no, Marvin. She isn't mine or ever will be. It's so hard for me to explain. I just saw her yesterday and only for the time it took to cut her hair. I saw something I had never quite seen before."

"This girl, she was different from other beautiful women that you see?"

"Yes. She was. Though, I can't tell you exactly what it was that set her apart. I know that I saw something beautiful, something that was lovelier than anything I had ever known before. And all of a sudden it hit me that I hadn't had it before, but that I had always wanted it. It just isn't coming to me in words, Marvin. I know what I feel inside, but I can't seem to say it to you. It's like sometimes when I'm walking outside. I have the greatest aching in my arms to lift them and touch the sky. I can't say why I want to reach up like that. The sky is so far removed from me, yet I want to touch it. And this girl was beautiful and noble and I realized what it was I was looking for. Is it so cowardly for a man to admit fear, Marvin? You see, I'm afraid—afraid of living just from day to day, afraid of Angel, even afraid of the people whose hair I cut. God knows, Marvin, it's a hell I live in."



Marvin sat silently for a long time, then he said: "Why don't you go? If you need monies, I help. Maybe you see all these places and then when you full of all these things you want, you come back home, and we can talk about it, and it be like I tell you, me going."

Max looked at him intently.

"You want me to go?"

"If it help."

"I'll need about a hundred dollars."

"I got it."

"God knows when you'll get it back, Marvin, but I swear to God I'll pay you back. I'll pay you back if it takes every last drop of blood."

"I ain't in no hurry."

"God, Marvin, what can I say to you?" Max went on almost to himself. "I'll tell Angel tomorrow—pay the landlady, and leave. Leave—oh God! Do you know I've wanted to go so long! I couldn't by myself, Marve. I didn't have the guts." Max became excited. The perspiration popped out on his face.

"Marve, this calls for a celebration. I'm gonna buy us a bottle of wine and we'll sit here and feel warm inside and talk about—God! we've so much to talk about and so little time."

Two weeks passed and one snowy night Mr. Angel walked into the Grill. He stood in the door brushing the dusty snow from his shoulders. He coughed a hollow cough. Marvin, seeing him from the kitchen, walked out.

"Bad under foot, eh, Mr. Angel?"

"Yeah."

Angel took off his coat and sat down heavily in one of the booths. Marvin brought him a menu. Angel squinted and said:

"Number 3 with turnips and peas."

"Coffee?" asked Marvin.

Angel shook his head back and forth. His eyes were glassy and his tongue was thick. Marvin realized he was drunk.

"Yeah, black. Say, Marvin, you were a friend of Max, weren't you?"

"Yes."

"Do you know what that fool did? He quit. Walked out, the damned bastard. Too bad for him—who the hell does he think he is, anyway? We're really making money; he could of been in on it."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah. I would promote him. Oh well, it's his loss. Why, God damn him! every time I think . . . I can get plenty more Maxes. What the hell does he think he is? indi . . . indispensable? Why, they're plentiful. Lots of little barbers."

"Angel, you're lying and you know it. Max was the best damn barber in this town. Barbers like him don't grow on trees."

"He's a God damn fool, that's what he is . . . leaving a good job. Why? Tell me why, for Christ's sake."

"Who knows? Maybe even Max don't. But a man's got to find out, don't he?"

"Well, didn't he tell you anything?"

"He told me he met a girl and she was beautiful to him in a way he didn't know how to say to me."

"That's the reason he left?"

"And sometimes his arms ache to reach up and feel the sky."

"Oh my God!"

Marvin stared at Mr. Angel for a moment. Then, he picked up the menu and wiping his face on his shirt sleeve, walked over to the door. He rubbed the frost from the glass and peeped out. He sighed and in a moment turned and walked back into the kitchen.

## Charlie My Boy

*(Continued from Page 14)*

isfaction from watching her carefully dust all that was left of her ancestors, but I guess I can see why Grandmother would not have liked it.

Or maybe it was because she was always making "useful" things like embroidered tidies for our chairs and crocheted furniture scarves and hooked rugs. The women in our family have never practiced this delicate woman's art, and I guess they could not understand her loving to do it so much. After the first flood of these things from her house to ours which came to an abrupt ending, she and Grandmother reached an understanding about them and since then everything has been all right.

I am told that there was a conclusive scene between Grandmother and Grandfather before the marble mantel in the front room. Grandpa considered the mantel personally his as much so as his gold toothpick. He had bought it straight off a ship in Savannah. To have gotten it up here without a single scratch was

a great feat which he accomplished by nursing it on the baggage car of the train himself and swearing that he'd break the back of any nigger that chipped it.

Grandpa immediately had the old mantel torn out. All one winter the new mantel stood in a corner of the parlor. The family shivered when forced to assemble there and Ramey and Dicie despaired of ever having another party while Grandpa declared that he could find no one he would trust to put the new mantel in place.

One afternoon when he came in, the mantel was covered in a scarf of crocheted, star-shaped medallions sewed together at their tips. The scarf hung all the way to the floor on both sides, and it must have taken Uncle Make's wife months to do it. Grandpa's anger was instant and violent at finding the crowning glory of his establishment draped in a "damned shroud" (his word). He jerked the scarf off and threw it into the fire.

After that there were no more examples of woman's art in our house. Ramey, who had been working on a scarf for the top of her organ to surprise Papa with, must have done something similar to hers because no one ever saw it again.

I was about to reach the happy conclusion that our family being what it is that all Sister's troubles would probably disappear in a similar explosive manner, when something struck the screen by my head. Like a stone maybe. I drew together in the bed and waited. It happened again. I grabbed for the sheet from the foot where I'd kicked it and rolled into the middle of the bed, letting the feather mattress rise up around me.

Then I heard footsteps on the porch. I lay there perspiring and almost smothering in the feather bed. The steps stopped outside the screen and there was a loud whisper, "Marion!"

I knew the voice instantly. It was Zel. If I had not been so anxious to talk to her, I'd have been mad as the dickens at her scaring me like that. I climbed out the window in my nightgown. When I think about it now, it seems so silly. Both of us on Uncle Make's porch and whispering like somebody'd come get us if we talked too loud.

"What are you doing here?" I demanded as loud as a whisper would let me. "Where's Charlie?" I looked around.

"Waiting out in the buggy," she said. "I told him I couldn't leave without seeing you." She hugged me quick and tight like she used to after I had given in and let her have her way about something. "Good-bye, Marion," she started down the steps.

"Where are you going?" I was so shocked that I sounded almost angry, and she stopped and turned around. "What did Daddy say?" I asked then, leaning out over the porch railing to where she was on the steps.

She kind of laughed then. "He was terrible. Terribly loud anyway. You could hear him all over the house. He put up some impossible conditions to Charlie so we're not staying." She kissed me on the forehead and went on down the steps.

"Oh, Zel," I said angrily, "you're no satisfaction at all. What happened?"

"Ask Mother, she'll have a better story than mine." She called from the yard.

By straining I could make out Charlie's horse and buggy at the gate. I saw the whiteness of Zel's dress disappear into it, and they drove off.

In the weeks that followed before we got a letter from Zel I had to piece together what I could get out of Mother when she was tired and wasn't exactly paying attention to what she said before I found out what had really happened while I was at Uncle Make's. I guess you might say it was the same explosive ending that I'd sort of expected, it being our family, but the fuse must have been lit on the wrong end this time for things to happen the way they did. I wanted to ask Daddy about it but I knew better than that.

The Curries have always been mighty high among the folks in the county and I guess it was pretty bitter medicine for Daddy to have them saying about him that he'd made the same mistake as another fellow—even if the Scarboroughs had been family friends for years. Nobody said much to Daddy in town, but he was so proud it hurt him more to have them thinking that the Scarboroughs got done in by Charlie Kent and then along come the Curries blind as bats and fall in the same hole after them. I sort of hated Zel for putting Daddy in such a position. It was like he *had* to make Charlie stay here and make good. Yet you could not expect him to *give* them the place. And then Charlie got mad because Daddy did not say things exactly to suit him and would not. And they ran off like they did.

When Daddy got home from Vidalia that night, Mother met him at the door and took him straight into the fire room. He must have started shouting in there. Something about the Scarboroughs losing everything but he'd be damed if the Curries would make the same mistake. Anyway Zel heard him where she was clear back in Mother's room, and I'm sure Charlie did across the hall in the parlor.

Daddy was still shouting when he flung open the parlor doors. "Young whippersnapper. Trust him with my land. Trust him with my daughter. And what does he do? Damn near slicks me out of the both of them." Mother hurried into the parlor behind Daddy. She said it was more like he was talking to himself than anything else because he did not look at Charlie, who had risen, but walked straight over to the mantel. He stood there for a long time with his hand clamped on to the mantel's edge and his head resting on his hand and his back to them. Mother sat down. Charlie just stood there and finally Daddy turned around and looked at him for the first time. "Charlie, I'll be reasonable with you," he said to him then. "I have to be. You've got my daughter now. I'll build you a little house on the back side of the place. You can go on farming my land like you've been doing. There'll be no separate fields for you of course. But—"

Charlie broke in quickly. "Mr. Currie, I didn't marry Mozelle to get a piece of your land to farm. Like I was a tenant—or maybe worse." He picked up his hat and went to the parlor doors. "I'm not share cropper stuff, Mr. Currie, and I don't aim for you to treat me like one!"

Mother said he looked just like his father then on that Sunday when Ramey had asked them to dinner. His voice was hard and like she'd always thought it would be if he ever got mad.

He walked out into the hall and called Zel, and they left. Mother and Daddy never stirred from the spot he was standing on till after the buggy drove away.

We did not hear a word from them for a long time, and then one day Daddy came home from town with a letter from Zel. It was mailed from Tifton, and she said they were living there now and that Charlie was working in the new hosiery mill.

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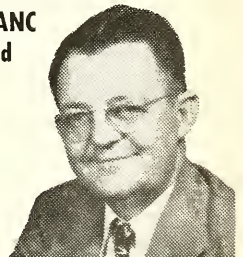


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